

Westwood & Highland Park Neighborhood Plan

April 19, 1999



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Neighborhood Plan***

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INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY

This document represents the work of the Westwood & Highland Park Planning Committee in bringing the vision of the community to implementation. The planning process is explained later in this section. The Plan contains

- . descriptions of the physical and demographic characteristics of the community;
- . issues and problems which the community faces;
- . descriptions of the analysis that was used to address the issues; and
- . recommendations for community and city actions.

OVERALL GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal 1 A diverse community with two distinct areas, Westwood and Highland Park, comprised of a mix of single and multi-family residential areas, significant public facilities, regional and local commercial businesses, and natural resource opportunities that together offer a variety of choices for its residents.

Policy 1 Encourage and strengthen a community-wide network of safe and convenient connections that unite Westwood and Highland Park and link major open spaces, transit facilities, commercial areas, schools, and other community facilities.

Policy 2 Seek to reclaim and enhance a major natural resource, Longfellow Creek, as a central linkage promoting recreational, environmental, and historical themes.

Policy 3 Strive to preserve existing single. family areas and increase the attractiveness of multi-family residential areas that offer a range



of attractive and safe housing choices affordable to a broad spectrum of the entire community.

Policy 4 Promote a system-wide and comprehensive transportation approach for West Seattle that strongly encourages safe, convenient, and efficient local improvements that serve the community

Policy 5 Seek to strengthen the neighborhood's economic core, Westwood Town Center (a regional and local retail/service center) and the 16th Avenue Business District

RECOMMENDATIONS

A "companion document to the Plan is the "Approval and Adoption Matrix". It is a specifically-formatted listing of the recommendations organized into "Key

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Strategies". Each Key Strategy consists of activities for a single complex project or theme that the neighborhood considers critical to achieving its vision for the future. While the Key Strategies are high priorities for the neighborhood, they are also part of a twenty-year plan, so the specific activities within each Key Strategy may be implemented over the span of many years.

The City recognizes the importance of the Key Strategies to the neighborhood that developed them. Given the number of Key Strategies that will be proposed from the 37 planning areas, priorities will have to be set and projects phased over time. The Executive will coordinate efforts to sort through the Key Strategies. During this sorting process, departments will complete, the next level of feasibility analysis. This may include developing rough cost estimates for the activities within each Key Strategy; identifying potential funding sources and mechanisms; establishing priorities for the Key Strategies within each plan, as well as priorities among plans; and developing phased implementation and funding strategies. The City will involve neighborhoods in a public process so that neighborhoods can help to establish citywide priorities. The results of these efforts will determine which strategies and activities are to be given priority for City response in 1998-2000 versus later implementation.

Key Strategy #1 - Link Westwood and Highland Park together through the Longfellow Creek Legacy Trail Network

The Westwood and Highland Park neighborhoods lie atop two ridges, with the valley between shared by both. The area has significant public facilities, and regional and local commercial activities provide a variety of choices for its residents, but vehicular and pedestrian circulation and access suffer from the

topography and conflicting land uses. With an area-wide pedestrian trail linking the two neighborhoods and their public facilities centered on the Longfellow Creek corridor, this Key Integrated Strategy provides the missing piece in the Planning Area - a pathway system adapting and highlighting existing travel pattern that can be made safer and more user friendly. The Longfellow Creek improvements are envisioned as part of the city-wide Millennium Project. Therefore, the recommended Westwood & Highland Park Plan's improvements merit timely attention.

Key Strategy #2. Integrate The Denny Sealth Southwest Recreation Complex Campus Master Plan

Much like the Ballard neighborhood's proposed Municipal Center, the Westwood and Highland Park communities view the planned improvements at the SW Recreation Complex as the chance to bring focus and attention to the Recreation Complex as West Seattle's very own South Civic Center. The Seattle School District's Recreation Complex Master Plan represents a unique opportunity to leverage neighborhood goals with this substantial capital improvement project, and include specific neighborhood needs not previously identified in the Master Plan.

The redevelopment also represents a chance for the neighborhood to add its analysis of impacts anticipated with the completion of the project. Chief of among these is the change in vehicle and pedestrian access to and circulation around the Recreation Complex, after completion of the project. Because the Recreation Complex adjoins the Westwood Town Center, there are additional congestion problems, and on certain dates during sports events, there are parking and crowd management issues to be resolved.

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Ksy Strategy #3. Revitalize The “Triangle” Commercial Core (16th Avenue SW District)

The area bounded by SW Henderson St., 15th Ave. SW, SW Roxbury St., and 20th Ave. SW is the core of the Westwood and Highland Park Urban Village, While Westwood Town Center provides many regional services, The Triangle Commercial Core (16th Ave. SW) has unique offerings and some local services different from the Westwood Town Center. The area can bring more business and activity to the Urban Village, and can support increased residential density, with physical improvements, business infill strategies, parking, traffic management, and design guidelines emphasizing gateways, pedestrian and transit improvements.

Key Strategy #4. Delridge Way S W Improvement Project

Roadway configuration, side street connections, intersection channelization, and traffic control in the Delridge Way S W Corridor do not adequately support safe, convenient traffic operations at numerous locations. The recommended work program enabling community-recommended pedestrian facilities and amenities to be incorporated into the currently planned and funded signalization project is intended to leverage this project in multiple ways.

The Delridge Way SW corridor plays multiple roles in the street system serving the Westwood and Highland Park neighborhood. Delridge Way SW links the neighborhood north to the West Seattle Bridge and the Delridge, Admiral, ” and Alki neighborhoods, Delridge Way SW also links the neighborhood south to SR-509 and the First Ave. South Bridge (via SW Roxbury St. and Olson Place SW), and to the White Center area. In addition, Delridge Way SW provides access to neighborhood commercial areas and distributes traffic to and from the east-west streets providing access to neighborhood

residential areas. King Coun tzz Metro transit operates bus service On Delridge Way SW.

In playing these roles, Delridge Way SW must serve as a main thoroughfare for peak commuter traffic, for local traffic, and for bicycle traffic. Delridge Way SW also must accommodate transit by facilitating efficient bus operations and by providing safe and convenient pedestrian access to and from bus stops. Because some of Delridge Way SW’S roles may conflict with others, it is important that Delridge Way SW be designed and operated in a way that balances the needs of traffic capacity, bicycle and pedestrian safety, and neighborhood access,

Other important strategies are also included in the Plan. These are less comprehensive in nature, or are less urgent and are called “near-term” or “long-term” strategies to differentiate them from the Key Strategies which are intended for more immediate action.

The remainder of this section of the Plan contains a brief description of the Westwood & Highland Park community and the planning process.

Urban settlement began in Westwood & Highland Park after the installation of the Highland Park - Lake Burien Railway in 1912, which provided easy access up the steep slopes of the Duwamish River to Burien. West of the Boeing Company’s Duwamish operations, the community grew and matured as this industrial company’s activities increased during and after the Second World War. Other parts of Seattle’s booming resource - based economy caused settlement in the area, and after the war, automobile mobility increased settlement further.

Today the community is home to more than 12,000 residents and a workplace for many

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employees of area businesses, schools, and community institutions.

In recent years, little attempt has been made to address some continuing community problems and opportunities within Westwood & Highland Park. The advent of the new Seattle Comprehensive Plan in 1994 initiated the neighborhood planning program which has enabled these two neighborhoods and their Urban Village cohorts throughout West Seattle to carry out community-based planning and develop strategies that will enable them to grow with grace in the future.

The Planning Process - Phase One

The planning process began in 1996 with community organization and visioning. This established the scope of the plan and prepared community leaders for the process which has involved assessing the importance of issues, development of solutions, and preparation of this Plan. While there is no issue with the ability of the preliminary Urban Village area's ability to accommodate the projected Comprehensive Plan growth, the way in which that growth can be accommodated is more dependent upon market factors and community image rather than on public regulations or incentives.

As the work of the Planning Committee progressed, the work of building community has focused to a great extent on open space, pedestrian access and amenities to provide safe, convenient, and attractive connections throughout the community and unite the two neighborhoods and forge connections with the magnets such as the business districts, schools, and community facilities. The Planning Area (described further in this section) has a tremendous wealth of resources, but these resources are just not well connected to each other.

During Phase One, community meetings and workshops were conducted. These meetings were designed to generate feedback on the concerns of residents, merchants, agencies, and other stakeholders. This process resulted in an assessment of conditions which were used to organize the Phase Two planning. The community responses to the Phase One process came up with the following "Top 10" visions:

1. ***Police presence***
2. ***Maintain single-family detached housing***
3. ***Expand library hours***
4. ***Pedestrian-friendly businesses***
5. ***Pedestrian safety on arterials***
6. ***More programs for home maintenance***
7. ***Block Watch***
8. ***Triangle commercial Core (16th Avenue SW business district)***
9. ***Street lights***
10. ***Increase the number of trash cans***

Some of these were appropriate to address in the neighborhood planning context. Others (police presence, expanded library hours, Block Watch, and trash cans) are not. A total of 35 items were evaluated during Phase One within the categories of Transportation, Parks and Recreation, Community Services, Housing and Land Use, Public Safety, and Economic Vitality. The Planning Committee used this guidance to shape the Plan recommendations along with the analysis, Committee evaluation, and other information that has informed the process. These recommendations will be further evaluated by the community, City departments and City Council, and then will be used to frame the adoption of the Plan.

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Phase Two

During Phase Two (1998-99), the Planning Committee met twice monthly to discuss the vision, problem statements and potential solutions that were posed in Phase One and further refined and analyzed in Phase Two. City staff and the consultant team assisted in the formation of the recommendations which were brought to the community through a series of newsletters, workshops and presentations.

This work culminated in October, 1998 alternatives workshops, and finally, in the January, 1999 Validation meetings. Prior to these meetings, a mailer was sent to every address in the community. The mailer summarized the recommendations and included a response sheet which the recipients used to express their support or opposition to the recommendations. A summary of the entire public outreach process, minutes of all committee meetings, and other background information generated during Phases One and Two is available.

THE COMMUNITY

Westwood & Highland Park is a community of diverse people and activities. It offers business services, religious institutions, shopping, recreation, and many other positive elements. The planning area is comprised of two neighborhoods joined, by Delridge Way SW. The original "downtown" shopping district formed by the intersection of Delridge Way SW and SW Roxbury Street and the Delridge Avenue corridor are surrounded by quiet single family and low-rise apartment neighborhoods, and some mid-rise apartments. Further north, near the Westwood Town Center shopping center; some condo-urn development has enriched the mixed-use character of the urban village center.



The shopping center, park and high school sit on the eastern slope of the Highland Park side of the valley. They are magnets for people of all ages, providing education, recreation, entertainment and employment opportunities. To the north of the shopping center several developments of townhouses along 22nd and 25th Avenues SW, provide a denser style of housing than the single family housing to the south, offering neighborhood intimacy of a more urban sort. Westwood & Highland Park's downtown commercial core and some newer apartment buildings are located at the south end of Delridge Way SW.

These important features help to establish the urban village and contribute to its function as a regional service center. In the Community Development section of the Plan, we describe some of the physical characteristics of the community which establish its identity. The high school, park, shopping center and busier streets are magnets for people from outside the immediate area. The shopping area

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around SW Roxbury St. and Delridge Way SW, with its sidewalks and small shops is a familiar and convenient asset. It keeps residents returning to shop, dine and receive services.

These important features help to establish the Urban Village center, making it attractive for local residents and a destination for visitors from other parts of the City.

Demographics

The population characteristics of the Westwood & Highland Park Planning Area are similar to those of the city as a whole.

According to the 1990 US Census fewer of the residents lived below the poverty level (7% vs. Seattle's 11 %). Of families with children, one third were headed by a single parent which was the same as the City. While the median household income in Westwood & Highland Park was four percent more than city wide, the per capita rate was 29% less, reflecting the larger household size in the community. More recent estimates of income for 1996 indicate that median household income has increased about 40'7. since 1990 and is now about 90 % of the City-wide median.

Average life expectancy at birth in the Westwood & Highland Park Planning Area

Table 1
1990 Demographic Characteristics
Planning Area, West Seattle, City Wide

Characteristic	Planning Area	% of Planning Area	City Wide	% of City Wide	% Planning Area of City Wide
Population	11,746	100%	516,259	100%	2%
Ethnicity					
White	8,505	72%	388,858	75%	2%
Black	721	6%	51,948	10%	1%
American Indian, Esk. or Aleut.	277	2%	7,326	1%	3%
Asian Pacific Islander	1,932	16%	60,819	11%	3%
Other	311	2%	7,308	1%	4%
Families	2,909	100%	93,798	18%	3%
Families w/ children	1,519	52%	47,378	9%	3%
Single Parents	512	17%	15,736	3%	3%
Transportation					
Drive	4,910	79%	197,312	38%	2%
Bus	852	13%	43,511	8%	2%
Other	433	7%	38,961	7%	1%
Income					
Median Household	30,516	N/A	29,353	N/A	103%
Per Capita	13,150	N/A	18,308	N/A	71%
Poverty					
Above	10,804	93%	436,652	2%	2%
Below	832	7%	61,681	1%	1%

However, compared to Seattle, the Westwood & Highland Park Planning Area had proportionately fewer adults age 20 and older.

in 1995 was 76.6 years. This was not significantly different than the life expectancy of Seattle as a whole, which was 76.7 years.

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Households

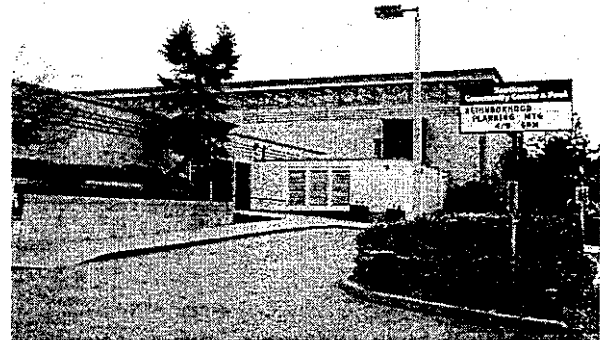
The 1990 census shows that the distribution of household type and tenure (ownership or rental) is similar in the Planning Area, compared to the City as a whole, except for multifamily dwellings. The Planning Area has far fewer households living in multifamily structures than the city wide average, and those in the Planning Area are concentrated in the Urban Village. Since 1990 there have been changes to the community's household characteristics although data are not yet available. A March, 1998 survey of multifamily structures of 20 units or more shows average rents of \$626.00 for the "White Center area" as a whole, with a vacancy

Table 2
Household Characteristics, 1990

Households	Planning Area	Urban Village	City Wide
Total Households	4,718	1,292	236,702
Single Family	2,559	451	128,618
Multiple Family	289	238	233,460
Own	2,748	598	115,709
Rent	2,749	598	120,993
vacant	178	55	12,330

rate of 3.5%. Recent informal surveys indicate that a higher percentage of multifamily dwellings and townhouses are in the Planning Area. The City-wide average rent in the same survey is \$653.00, with a vacancy rate of 1.9%.

Some more recent useful information has been compiled for the Delridge Neighborhood Development Association (Economic Consulting Services). This analysis was prepared to examine the market feasibility for a mixed-use development project in the area just north of Westwood & Highland Park. The information cited in the following pertains to Census Tracts 113 and 114, which comprise most of the Westwood & Highland Park Planning Area.



The 1997 estimated population of Census Tract 113 was 5,548 - up 2.1% from the 1990 population. The population of Tract 114 increased 9.5% between 1990-97 to an estimated 7,266. The median household income of Tract 113 increased 38.2% between 1990 and 1996. The median income of Tract 114 increased 44.8% during the same period, "The Seattle area Consumer Price Index increased 33.4% during the period which means that the

income **increases in the two** Census Tracts outpaced inflation.

PUBLIC SAFETY

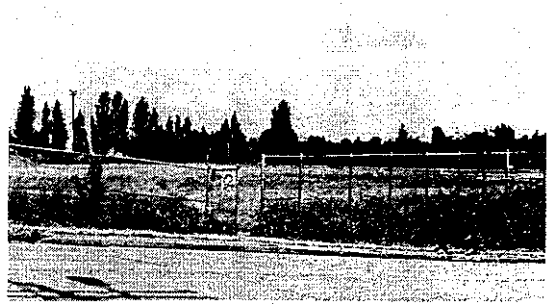
Since public safety emerged as a critical issue in Phase One, the following analysis of current reported crime in the community was produced. This enables the community to keep track of future trends in comparison to history as well as to understand the local

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context of public safety in comparison to city-wide characteristics,

How safe is Westwood & Highland Park? The Seattle Police Department reports crime statistics by census tract. For Census Tract 114, there are above-average levels of serious crimes. While there may be differences of opinion about a perceived sense of safety, 1995 and 1997 police records show that the Westwood & Highland Park Planning Area (if considered Census Tract 114) does suffer from crime problems. The Planning Area has a shopping mall, a downtown area, and a separate shopping area adjacent but not within its boundaries, so some of this crime can be attributed to the populations traveling because of commercial activity.

The area does have crime incidents "considerably above the median" when compared to two other planning areas in West Seattle. For the most serious offenses, Westwood-Highland Park has crime incidents above the median.



Westwood/Highland Park Census Tracts

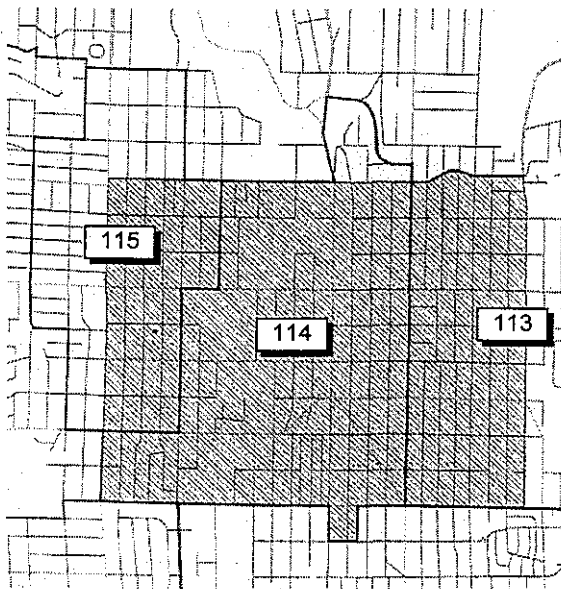


Table 3
Serious Crimes per Capita
Census Tract 114-1997

Planning Area	8.5
Census Tract 114	
California Ave. at Morgan	17.8
California Ave. at Admiral	13.7
City Wide	9.4

(1997 part I offenses per census tract/population per census tract. For example: **Census Tract 114** had 841 Part I offenses and the 1997 population estimate for the Census Tract was 7226; therefore $7226/841 = 8.5$).

If we use the larger and less exact South Precinct W 6 patrol car area to approximate the Planning Area, then the Planning Area has an average rate of crime. The South Precinct W 6 patrol car area has approximately the **same** boundaries as census tracts 114 and 113.

Table 4
Serious Crimes per Capita
Police Patrol Areas, 1995

Planning Area (W6)	10.2
California Ave. at Morgan (W2 & W3)	13.1
California Ave. at Admiral (W1)	18.4
City Wide	9.4

(1995 part I offenses per census tract/population per census, tract. Example: W6 Total Part I offenses = 1462; 1995 population (est.) per W6 = 14954; $14954/1462 = 10.2$. Please note W1 & W2 divide the Urban Village at California Ave. SW, at Morgan in half, so both areas are used to figure crimes per capita.

For the Urban Village itself, information from the Police Department illustrates the incidents of crime, both serious and less so. For 1997, except for murder, (there were none in the Urban Village), more than half of all serious crimes in the Planning Area occurred in the Urban Village. But, as with the discussion above about the number shoppers, drivers, and non-residential activity in the Planning Area compared to the census tract as a whole, the Urban Village hosts on an average day more visitors than its size might suggest. Nevertheless, the amount of crime is serious.

Either explanation shows that our Planning Area is not in the best area of safety in the City, and one goal of this project is to improve the quality of life in the Planning Area and its Urban Village, so these rates should be improved.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

The Plan has been organized into three sections, conforming to the categories of issues and problems which were addressed during the process. These are:

- Parks, Recreation & Open Space
- Transportation
- Land Use, Housing & Community Development

Each section contains the goals and policies intended to address the overall community vision; a discussion of the **issues** and problems that were addressed; and the recommended solutions or strategies that were developed to address the issues. The recommendations are the same as the strategies contained in the Approval and Adoption Matrix.